

## Andrew Jackson to James Monroe, January 25, 1815, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### TO SECRETARY MONROE.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This letter is in the War Dept. files, and a draft of it is in the Jackson MSS.

New Orleans, January 25, 1815.

*Sir*, I advised you on the 20th that the enemy had two nights before, decamped and returned to his flotilla. No circumstances have since transpired to make it certain whether he intends to abandon his original purpose altogether or to exert his efforts for its accomplishment at some other point. I am perswaded however that the discomfiture he has met with has left him without the means of prosecuting it for the present with any hopes of success; But having manifested, by bringing with him all the preparations for the immediate establishment of colonial government, not only the facility with which he calculated on attaining his object, but the high value which he set upon it, it is not improbable that though disappointed in his hopes of easy success he may not have finally relinquished his intention. The interval of his absence ought therefore to be industriously employed in providing the most effectual means against his possible return. My opinion is that for the effectual defence of this District, should the enemy meditate a renewal of his attempts, not less than 5000 regular troops are necessary; and for *permanent* defence, that is the only description of troops upon which reliance can be placed. It is true, the militia who were sent hither from the Country above, on the late emergency have approved themselves worthy the high confidence we had in them, and shewn indeed, that for such a purpose they are inferior to no troops in the world; but it is only for purposes thus temporary that they can be considered as valuable. The short periods of

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their engagements, not more than their habits of life by which when they have made one excursion or fought one battle, they are so strongly recalled to their famil[i]es and home render them a very unequal match, in continued warfare, for men who following arms as a profession, are scarcely entitled to merit for perseverance.

The secrecy and expedition with which the enemy was enabled to approach us with so powerful a force, is also a proof that that by which his future designs must be resisted ought not to depend upon accident in its arrival or be subject to delay in its application. As composing a part of the force which may be necessary for the defence of this country I would beg leave to recommend 6 companies of Light Artillery, and 1000 riflemen as peculiarly suitable; and permit me also to remark that an able engineer is greatly wanted here, and cannot be sent too soon. Officers are greatly wanted to complete the 3d, 7th, and 44th Regts which are very deficient.

The innumerable bayous and outlets from the Lakes which had hitherto been so little known, or regarded, gave to the enemy on his late incursion facilities of which it will be my duty to deprive him hereafter; and when I shall have succeeded in that, the force which would otherwise be necessary for the defence of this country, will bear considerable diminution.

I will further take the liberty to suggest that the Block ship, now lying on lake Ponchartrain in an unfinished state ought immediately to be completed; why she has been thus left I am quite at a loss to conjecture; as she is peculiarly adapted to the defence of the lakes. What makes it the more remarkable is that the covering which has been provided for her has probably cost the government more than it would to have completed her. Col Haynes to whom this is entrusted will be enabled from the opportunities he has had, and his accuracy of observation to afford much useful information on the several points to which I have referred as well as on others relative to the situation and the proper defences of this Country.<sup>2</sup>

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2 To Col. A. P. Hayne, Jackson gave written instructions in a letter of Jan. 25, and in them he embodied his recommendations for the reward by promotion of the officers who had distinguished themselves during the campaign. See Parton (II. 275), where the letter of instructions is given. In writing to Hayne, Jackson said that he did not make his suggestions to the Secretary of War himself because he was “prevented by motives of delicacy and other causes”. But he might have saved himself trouble in this respect, for on March 27, 1815, he received from the War Department a request for his suggestions of promotions—to be forwarded by mail, if Jackson found himself unable to go to Washington in person.